IN THE CLAIMS

1-20. (canceled).

21. (new) An intervertebral spacer device comprising:

first and second plates disposed in a spaced apart relationship such that an inner surface of said first plate faces an inner surface of said second plate;

a semispherical protuberance projecting from the inner surface of one of said first and second plates;

a wave washer disposed between the inner surfaces of said first and second plates for counteracting compressive loads applied to said first and second plates, said wave washer having a central bore forming a curvate socket, wherein said semispherical protuberance is insertable into the curvate socket so that said first and second plates are rotatable and angulatable relative to one another.

22. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein said semispherical protuberance is radially inwardly deflectable in response to a radially inwardly directed force.

23. (new) The device as claimed in claim 22, wherein said semispherical protuberance is insertable into the curvate socket only when radially inwardly deflected.

24. (new) The device as claimed in claim 22, further comprising a deflection preventing element insertable into an axial bore formed in said semispherical protuberance to prevent said semispherical protuberance from deflecting inwardly.

25. (new) The device as claimed in claim 24, wherein said semispherical protuberance comprises at least one radial slot.

26. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein said wave washer is selected from the group consisting of a ring-shaped wave washer, a spiral-shaped wave washer, a conical-shaped wave washer, and a semispherical-shaped wave washer.

27. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein said wave washer has an outer edge that extends around said central bore of said wave washer.

28. (new) The device as claimed in claim 27, wherein said wave washer comprises a plurality of waves, each said wave having a length that extends from said central bore to said outer edge of said wave washer.

29. (new) The device as claimed in claim 28, wherein at least one of said waves has a depth that varies along the length thereof between said central bore and said outer edge of said wave washer.

30. (new) The device as claimed in claim 28, wherein at least one of said waves has a depth that is uniform along the length thereof between said central bore and said outer edge of said wave washer.

31. (new) The device as claimed in claim 28, wherein at least one of said waves has a width that varies along the length thereof between said central bore and said outer edge of said wave washer.

32. (new) The device as claimed in claim 28, wherein at least one of said waves has a width that is uniform along the length thereof between said central bore and said outer edge of said wave washer.

33. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein at least one of said waves has a circumferential extent that is radially wavy.

34. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein said wave washer has at least one concentric groove.

35. (new) The device as claimed in claim 34, wherein the at least one concentric groove has a depth and a width, and wherein at least one of the width and the depth varies along a length of the concentric groove.

36. (new) The device as claimed in claim 21, wherein said wave washer has a circumferential extent having at least one radially extending wave valley having a depth and a width that radially varies.

37. (new) An artificial intervertebral disc comprising:

first and second plates disposed in a spaced apart relationship, said first and second plates having inner surfaces that confront one another and outer surfaces that face away from one another;

a semispherical protuberance projecting from the inner surface of said first plate, wherein said semispherical protuberance is radially inwardly deflectable in response to a radially inwardly directed force;

a wave washer disposed between the inner surfaces of said first and second plates for counteracting compressive loads applied to said first and second plates, said wave washer having a central bore forming a curvate socket, wherein said semispherical protuberance is insertable into the curvate socket so that said first and second plates are rotatable and angulatable relative to one another.

38. (new) The device as claimed in claim 37, wherein said semispherical protuberance has an axial bore, said device further comprising a deflection preventing element insertable into the axial bore to prevent said semispherical protuberance from deflecting inwardly.

39. (new) The device as claimed in claim 38, wherein said semispherical protuberance is insertable into the curvate socket only when radially inwardly deflected.

40. (new) The device as claimed in claim 37, wherein said wave washer is selected from the group consisting of a ring-shaped wave washer, a spiral-shaped wave washer, a conical-shaped wave washer, and a semispherical-shaped wave washer.